

TRAVEL NOTES.

GODESBERG AM RHEIN.

Any students who are thinking of going to Germany in their summer holidays may like to hear of the place where I spent a month last year.

Godesberg is three miles south of Bonn, and can be reached by steamer from Rotterdam, or by rail from Antwerp or the Hook. The return fare from London, *via* Harwich and the Hook, is £2 18s. od. second class, with 11s. extra for saloon cabin on the boat. Leaving Liverpool Street Station at 8.30 p.m., we reached Cologne about noon the next day, and should have arrived at Godesberg soon after two o'clock if we had gone straight on. But we spent the afternoon in Cologne and repented of having done so afterwards, for we were much too tired to appreciate it.

Godesberg is an old town which has grown very much within the last twelve years, having become a favourite summer resort for German families. The villas, which are not aggressively new, are white, and their balconies and verandahs are filled with flowers—pink geraniums, lobelia, and marguerites. The roads are shaded by avenues of trees.

Along the Rhine is a promenade, where people come to enjoy the river breezes and to watch the barges, steamers, and motor-boats which pass continually up and down. There is a landing stage at Godesberg, and a few of the express pleasure steamers which go from Cologne to Mainz call every day and slower ones nearly every hour. In a day's trip one can go as far as Coblenz and back, or down the river to Cologne. Never shall I forget the gorgeous beauty of the Liebenberg at sunset as one approached them coming down the river.

There are forests of pine and beech inland behind the town and from them one can look down on the river, valley, and the town of Godesberg with its hill in the centre, crowned by the ruins of a castle, the round tower of which is still standing.

The German girls of the family with whom we stayed were most willing to plan expeditions and show us places of interest. They would talk German to us all the time, and it was quite a relief sometimes for two of us to walk together and refresh ourselves with English.

The villages within walking distance are most picturesque, the dwellings being very old. A great deal of fruit is grown, and the apricot trees, laden with their golden fruit, were a lovely sight in August.

The British Chaplain of Bonn lives at Godesberg, and there were two services every Sunday in a minute Chapel in his garden. The majority of the people in the Rhine Valley,—about seven-eighths, I believe—are Roman Catholics.

The family with whom we stayed is Protestant. The address is :

Frau Haasen,
Bachstrasse 24,
Godesberg-am-Rhein, Germany.

If any of you should think of going there and would like further particulars, I shall be most pleased to write and tell you more about it.

H. M. FOUNTAIN.

Another student and I spent our last Summer holidays in Germany. We stayed with a family at Friedrichstr. 9, Heidelberg. Herr and Frau Direktor Wittmann were extremely kind people: we could not possibly have been better treated.

There are three sons, from ten to fifteen, who did their best to make us exercise our German. Frau Direktor's time was very much occupied, her husband being Direktor

of the Ober-realschule, and so we were obliged to take German lessons with an excellent teacher, Fraulein Kroll.

Frau Direktor's fees are £9 per month. The lessons are 5s. each an hour for one or two people.

The journey takes about twenty-one hours, going straight from the coast by train, but anyone having the time should not miss a day on the Rhine from Cologne to Mainz. It necessitates spending a night at Cologne because the boat leaves at 10 a.m., but it is well worth the little trouble and extra expense.

W. L.

VARIOUS ACTIVITIES.

FENCING.

Hamlet: Give us the foils. Come on.

Laertes: Come, one for me.

Hamlet: I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance

Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,

Stick fiery off indeed.

It may be interesting to some readers of the "Plant" to hear a few notes on Fencing. I had always heard it was very good exercise for ladies, but did not know how good until this term, when I was able to join an Evening Class, and have two lessons a week with a French-Belgian master.

The requirements are a *foil*, a *mask*, a *jacket* made of some kind of canvas, not too heavy but stiff enough to offer some resistance if the foil should break against it, a *short skirt* so that the feet are not covered in lunging, a *padded glove* and *fencing shoes*, which are made so that there is no chance of slipping and give a firm grip.

It sounds rather a large order, but a gymnasium costume with a pad in front would do equally well, so far as dress is concerned.

Since duelling days it has fallen into disuse in England, but an interesting book, "Schools and Masters of Fence," published by Mr. Egerton Castle, has helped to revive it of late years.

The first thing to learn is how to control your body, so that in either parrying (guarding yourself against the

enemy's attack) or attacking, it leaves you free to devote all your attention to watching your adversary in order to thwart his attacks and baffle his parries. When the technical part (which means a lot of practice, but a great deal can be done alone and is very exhilarating exercise) has been mastered, the judgment is brought into play, and it is the quick decision and knowledge of the opponent's movements that are the sign of a fine fencer.

Good fencing brings into play intelligence, temper, patience, quickness, prompt decision, and balance, and it does not merely consist (as is sometimes imagined by onlookers) in a number of mechanical movements applied one after the other in a wooden, unintelligent manner. Of course, a certain amount is mechanical, and, as in music, the *technique* needs continuous practice, but when all the simple parries and attacks have been mastered, so that they can be applied instinctively, and a good position has been acquired, the whole attention can be given to watching the enemy, and the judgment can have free play.

A fencer who uses his head is ready for all adversaries, however different their methods of engagement and temperaments. For instance, the same methods will not answer with an impetuous opponent who makes rushes and a cautious one who hardly ever begins an attack but tries to draw you out, and then take advantage of any fault you may make; so that adapting yourself to different styles can only be done by the head.

I have found it a great help watching others, as it is so much easier to see their faults than your own, and then, when your turn comes, you know how to correct your mistakes.

The foil is quite a light weight, and no great force is needed, so that your movements are as free and easy as in Swedish Drill, and the more you feel power the more interesting it becomes, because the more you can use your own judgment and ideas.

I can strongly recommend it to anyone who is mentally lazy or who feels the cold. Five minutes' fencing will make you thoroughly alert *and* warm!